

## NSC BRIEFING

19 June 1953

## LEBANON

- I. Events are moving very rapidly. An uneasy lull in fighting prevails in Beirut.
- A. President Chamoun--after panicking night of 16th--feels fairly optimistic and keeps prodding General Shihab to take more forceful action against the rebels. Chamoun fears that the rebels will make an all-out effort to seize control in Beirut within the next day or two. He showed to US embassy--along with his wife's jewels--a document signed by entire cabinet authorizing Chamoun to request US/UK intervention at his discretion.
- B. Chamoun said intervention request would hinge on willingness of General Shihab to proceed with attacks against the rebels and break their back.

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**IV. Christian pre-government partisans in Beirtu patrolling Christian quarters and water front. Some firing from Moslem Basta quarter into Christian quarter on 17 June.**

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**A. Reported that rebels planning to seize tall buildings near American University in order to fire from rooftops.**

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**[ ] rebels will make major effort using VAR fedayeen very soon.**

**Primary objective will be presidential palace. Ammunition being distributed in large quantities in Basta on 17-18 June.**

**B. President Chamoun has stated that interrogation of Syrian prisoners reveals 25 Syrian officers and NCO's in Basta working with opposition. He plans to turn confessions over to UN observers.**

**V. Jordanian Prime Minister Rifai has stated his government will take any action requested by Beirut to "preserve Lebanon's independence". He commented "nothing short of armed intervention will save the situation."**

**VI. Prime Minister Sami Sulh views the situation in a much dimmer light than Chamoun and is pushing for intervention.**

**VII. On the other side, Nasir's "mouthpiece" Hasanayn Kaykal told the American ambassador in Cairo that Nasir feels he has been played for a sucker" by the US in order to neutralize him in the Lebanese crisis.**

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**A. Damascus radio on 17 June called directly on Lebanese army to join rebel side.**

**VIII. Arab Union officials, who are not sanguine over the future of their union in any case, fear Iraq may be next Nasir target after Lebanon.**

**A. Prime Minister Nuri Said has made it clear that he is not satisfied with American and British offers of aid.**

- 1. He insists that Kuwait must join the Arab Union and has gained support of top Jordanian leaders for this.**
- 2. He wants \$6,000,000 more than the \$29,000,000 offered, but is willing to let the case of Kuwait stand until next March, when he insists it must join the union.**
- 3. Notwithstanding his objections, he is allowing a deficit budget to be passed.**

Approved For Release 2003/11/05 : CIA-RDP79R00890A001000020004-0

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